



Leslie Blatteau

President, New Haven Federation of Teachers, Local 933
At Large Vice President, American Federation of Teachers - Connecticut
Member of Recovery For All Coalition
Resident of New Haven, CT

2. Proposed H.B. No. 5438 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A DEBT-FREE STATE COLLEGE PROGRAM FOR EMPLOYEES OF DAY CARE FACILITIES, HOME HEALTH CARE AGENCIES AND NURSING HOMES. (HED)
3. Proposed H.B. No. 5441 AN ACT CONCERNING COLLEGE GRADUATES WHO WORK IN THE FIELDS OF EDUCATION OR HEALTH CARE IN THE STATE. (HED)
5. Proposed H.B. No. 6097 AN ACT CONCERNING TUITION WAIVERS FOR PARAEDUCATORS WHO SEEK A DEGREE IN EDUCATION. (HED)

General Comments

Good afternoon Senator Slap, Representative Haddad, and ranking members Senator Kelly and Representative Haines.

I am the President of New Haven Federation of Teachers, a union representing over 1700 educators in New Haven Public Schools and an At-Large Vice President of AFT-CT, a 30,000 member strong statewide union representing 10,000 teachers and educators in Connecticut. I am also a member of the statewide coalition of unions, community organizations, and faith based groups Recovery For All.

As someone who has worked for a long time with high school students as they craft their post secondary plans and as someone who currently represents educators during a time of crisis, intense need and workplace shortages, I would first like to comment on Proposed House Bills 5438, 5441, and 6097.

While it is clear that the details of the bills still need to be worked out, increased support for students pursuing service professions such as child care, healthcare, nursing, and education is most welcome. Economic obstacles that impede working class and low income students from accessing higher education must be removed.

Not only so students and families can pursue their academic and professional goals, but also so we can address the worker shortages in our systems that need workers now more than ever.

These are issues of racial, gender, and economic justice. And in a state as wealthy as Connecticut, where multi millionaires and billionaires pay local and state tax rates as low as 6%, there is no reason for our high school graduates and other interested candidates to incur burdensome student loan debt when they are eager to get the training and credentials required to serve and support our children, our elders, and others with medical needs.

We look forward to working with legislators and assisting in crafting legislation in any way that is helpful. Thank you for your commitment to this important work.